

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-02

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TAGS: ECOSOC

SUBJECT: 61ST ECOSOC: AGENDA ITEM 30, REPORT OF UNITED NATIONS

HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

(E/5853) AND OUTCOME OF DRAFT

RESOLUTION E/L.1730 AND COR. 1

REF.: (A) GENEVA 6026; (B) STATE 18915

1. SUMMARY: SUBJECT DRAFT RESOLUTION, WHICH HAD GATHERED THIRTY CO-SPONSORS, WAS ADOPTED WITHOUT AMENDMENT AND WITHOUT A VOTE BY THE ECOSOC PLENARY ON 2 AUGUST. IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE DECISION AUSTRALIA RECORDED ITS RESERVATIONS CONCERNING REFERENCE IN THE RESOLUTION TO UNHCR'S ROLE IN MAN-MADE DISASTERS WHICH IN ITS EYES RAISES A JURISDICTION ISSUE WITH OTHER UN ORGANIZATIONS IN THE DISASTER FIELD--MOST EXPECIALLY WITH UNDRO. END SUMMARY.

2. THE COUNCIL RESUMED ITS CONSIDERATION OF THIS ITEM AND HEARD ELEVEN MORE BRIEF STATEMENTS SUPPORTING SUBJECT DRAFT RESOLUTION AND WARMLY PRAISING THE WORK OF UNHCR AND ITS HIGH COMMISSIONER PRINCE

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SADRUDDIN AGA KHAN. POSITIVE STATEMENTS WERE

MADE BY AUSTRIA, DENMARK, CANADA, JORDAN, THE FRG, COLOMBIA, VENEZUELA, PAKISTAN, AFGHANISTAN, AS WELL AS BY THE OBSERVERS FROM CYPRUS AND TURKEY, AND BY ARGENTINA,

3. PROBABLY BECAUSE OF ALLEGED REPRESSION, IN GENERAL, AND A RECENT MESSAGE SENT BY PRINCE AGA KHAN TO ARGENTINE PRESIDENT VIDELA PROTESTING THE DETENTION OF AT LEAST 20 URUGUAYAN POLITICAL REFUGEES, IN PARTICULAR, THE ARGENTINE DELEGATE, MADE A POINT OF INDICATING THAT ARGENTINA ADHERED STRICTLY TO ALL UN HUMAN RIGHTS AND OTHER PERTINENT RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING REFUGEES.

4. THE REPRESENTATIVE OF AUSTRALIA CAUTIONED AGAINST POSSIBLE DUPLICATION OF ACTION AS BETWEEN THE UNHCR, THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR (UNDRO) AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS (ICRC). HE FELT THAT THE DRAFT RESOLUTION, IN RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ESSENTIALLY HUMANITARIAN TASKS UNDERTAKEN BY THE UNHCR IN THE CONTEXT OF MAN-MADE DISASTERS, RAISED A JURISDICTIONAL ISSUE WHICH WOULD NEED CAREFUL STUDY BY THE ACC AND OTHER GROUPS.

5. HE SAID THAT AN AGREED DEMARCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNHCR, UNDRO, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF) AND THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) IN RELATION TO HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE WAS NEEDED. HE MADE A POINT OF SAYING THAT UNDRO HAD SOME MANDATE TO COORDINATE DISASTER RELIEF ACTIVITIES AND RECENTLY HAD RECEIVED "SUFFICIENT FUNDS" TO CARRY OUT ITS WORK.

6. COMMENT: THE US DELEGATION IS AWARE THAT A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS (INCLUDING THE US AND UK) WERE APPROACHED BY UNDRO DIRECTOR BERKOL
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AND/OR MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF EXPRESSING THEIR VIEW THAT THE WORDING OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION DID NOT PROPERLY TAKE INTO ACCOUNT UNDRO'S COORDINATING ROLE IN NATURAL AND "OTHER" DISASTERS.

7. FOLLOWING ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER MADE A BRIEF STATEMENT IN WHICH HE THANKED EVERYONE WHO HAD SPOKEN IN

SUPPORT OF THE MANNER IN WHICH UNHCR WAS CON-
DUCTING ITSELF AND ALL THOSE WHO HAD CO-SPONSORED
THE RESOLUTION. HE MADE NO PARTICULAR REFERENCE
TO THE STATEMENTS MADE BY EITHER AUSTRALIA, OR
ARGENTINA. CATTO

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